

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 21-32, 34-44, 46-51 and 53-55, and add new claims 56-89 as set forth below:

1-55. (Canceled)

56. (New) A method of notifying a participant that a network accessible item is of current interest, the method comprising:

providing an indication of interest in one or more interest categories;

receiving in real time at a first time via an alerting user an alert regarding the network accessible item, wherein:

the alerting user is not the participant and both the alerting user and the participant are individuals;

the network accessible item is associated with content that changes over time;

the alert indicates that the content of the network accessible item at the current time is of interest;

the alert is based at least in part on a real time change, perceived by the alerting user, in the content of the network accessible item; and

at least one interest category is assigned to the network accessible item;

providing notification in real time at a second time to the participant that the network accessible item is of current interest, wherein the network accessible item is associated with at least one interest category in which the participant previously indicated interest, and the second time is substantially the same as the first time.

57. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the network accessible item is identified by a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

58. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the alert includes an interest category specified by the alerting user.

59. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the processing further includes determining an alert intensity.

60. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the processing further includes determining an alert intensity based at least in part on the alerting user's identity.

61. (New) The method of claim 56, further comprising storing data associated with the alert.

62. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein the processing further includes using stored data associated with a previous alert.

63. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein the processing further includes determining an intensity rank for the alert, and further comprising, if the intensity rank is below a threshold, deleting stored data associated with the alert.

64. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the processing further includes determining an intensity rank for the alert.

65. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the processing further includes determining an intensity rank for the alert that decays exponentially with time.

66. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the processing further includes determining an intensity rank for the alert, wherein the participant is notified about multiple network accessible items of current interest, and wherein the multiple network accessible items are selected based at least in part on intensity rank.

67. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the participant is notified about multiple network accessible items of current interest and the multiple network accessible items are ordered with respect to each other.

68. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the participant is notified about multiple network accessible items of current interest and the multiple network accessible items are selected based at least in part on a sensitivity level associated with the participant.

69. (New) The method of claim 56, further comprising displaying to the participant content associated with the network accessible item of current interest.

70. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the alert includes a caption specified by the alerting user.

71. (New) An apparatus for notifying a participant that a network accessible item is of current interest, the apparatus comprising:

- a first interface component configured to receive from the participant an indication of interest in one or more interest categories;
- a communication component configured to receive in real time from an alerting user an alert regarding the network accessible item, wherein:
 - the alerting user is not the participant and both the alerting user and the participant are individuals;
 - the network accessible item is associated with content that changes over time;
 - the alert indicates that the content of the network accessible item at the current time is of interest; and
 - the alert is based at least in part on a change, perceived by the alerting user, in the content of the network accessible item;

a processor configured to process the alert; and
a second interface component configured to provide notifications in real time to the participant that the network accessible item is of current interest, wherein the network accessible item is associated with at least one interest category in which the participant previously indicated interest.

72. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the network accessible item is identified by a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

73. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the alert includes an interest category specified by the alerting user.

74. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the processing includes assigning at least one interest category to the network accessible item.

75. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the processing includes determining an alert intensity.

76. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, further comprising a storage component configured to store data associated with the alert.

77. (New) The apparatus of claim 76, wherein the processing includes using stored data associated with a previous alert.

78. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the processing includes determining an intensity rank for the alert, wherein the participant is notified about multiple network accessible items of current interest and wherein the multiple network accessible items are selected based at least in part on intensity rank.

79. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, further comprising a third interface component configured to display to the participant content associated with the network accessible item of current interest.

80. (New) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the alert includes a comment specified by the alerting user.

81. (New) A method of notifying a participant that a network accessible item is of current interest, the method comprising:

- receiving from an alerting user an alert regarding the network accessible item in real time at a first time, wherein:

- the alerting user is a second individual who is not the participant;

- the network accessible item is associated with content that changes over time; and

- the alert is based at least in part on a change, perceived by the alerting user, in the content of the network accessible item;

- assigning at least one category to the network accessible item; and

- if the participant previously indicated an interest in the assigned at least one category, automatically notifying the participant that the network accessible item is of current interest at a second time that is substantially the same as the first time.

82. (New) The method of claim 81, wherein the network accessible item is identified by a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

83. (New) The method of claim 81, wherein the alert includes a category specified by the alerting user.

84. (New) The method of claim 81, wherein the alert includes a comment specified by the alerting user.

85. (New) A system for notifying a participant that a network accessible item is of current interest, the system comprising:

means for receiving from the participant an indication of interest in one or more interest categories;

means for receiving in real time at a first time via an alerting user an alert regarding the network accessible item, wherein:

the alerting user is not the participant and both the alerting user and the participant are individuals;

the network accessible item is associated with content that changes over time;

the alert indicates that the content of the network accessible item at the current time is of interest; and

the alert is based at least in part on a real time change, perceived by the alerting user, in the content of the network accessible item;

means for processing the alert; and

means for notifying in real time at a second time to the participant that the network accessible item is of current interest, wherein the network accessible item is associated with at least one interest category in which the participant previously indicated interest, and wherein the second time is substantially the same as the first time.

86. (New) The system of claim 85, wherein the network accessible item is identified by a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

87. (New) The system of claim 85, wherein the alert includes an interest category specified by the alerting user.

88. (New) The system of claim 85, wherein the processing includes assigning at least one interest category to the network accessible item.

89. (New) The system of claim 85, wherein the processing includes determining an alert intensity.